HANCOCK'S HALF HOUR (Original Scripts)

Series 1.
Episode 7. THE DEPARTMENT STORE SANTA

TONY HANCOCK
With
MOIRA LISTER, BILL KERR & SIDNEY JAMES
In
"HANCOCK'S HALF HOUR"
No. 7
Dramatis Personae

Tony Hancock (a waif) ..... Mr. Anthony Alouitious St. John Hancock 11
Moira Lister (Tony's girlfriend)..... Miss Moira Lister

Bill Kerr (Tony's best friend) ..... Mr. Bill Kerr

Sidney James (a friend?)..... Mr. Sidney James

INCIDENTAL MUSIC COMPOSED BY WALLY STOTT AND RECORDED BY THE BBC AUGMENTED REVUE ORCHESTRA, CONDUCTED BY HARRY RABINOWITZ

SCRIPT: RAY GALTON & ALAN SIMPSON
ANNOUNCER: ADRIAN WALLER
PRODUCED BY - DENNIS MAIN WILSON

REHEARSALS: SATURDAY 11th DECEMBER 1954: 12.00am. CAMDEN

RECORDING: SATURDAY 11th DECEMBER 1954: 4.30 - 5.15pm. CAMDEN

TRANSMISSION: TUESDAY 14th DECEMBER 1954: 9.30 - 10.00pm. LIGHT

REPEATS: SATURDAY 18th DECEMBER 1954: 10.30 - 11.00am. GOS
SUNDAY 19th DECEMBER 1954: 3.15 - 3.45pm. GOS

CONTINUITY:
(Live) THIS IS THE BBC LIGHT PROGRAMME

GRAMS: (ON RED LIGHT) "HANCOCK OPENING" - PART 1

ADRIAN: We present Tony Hancock with Moira Lister, Bill Kerr and Sidney James in….
GRAMS: "HANCOCK OPENING" - PART 2

TONY: (ALL EXCITED - BREATH) "Hancock's Half Hour".

GRAMS: "HANCOCK OPENING" - PART 3

ADRIAN: The task of being a comedy star is a hard one. He never has a moment of leisure to himself, even first thing in the morning. At the breakfast table, he is already at work going through his mail.

GRAMS: "HANCOCK THEME" (UP & UNDER)

EFFECTS: (DOOR OPEN)

MOIRA: (COMING ON) Morning Tony.

TONY: Hallo Moira. Sit down, I won't be a minute. I'm just finishing off me letters. Listen - how does this one sound? (READS) "Dear Sir, it is my considered opinion that you are the most despicable scoundrel I have ever had the misfortune to meet. You have lied to me, cheated me, ridiculed me and insulted me. You have taken advantage of my friendship and abused my hospitality. It is difficult to imagine how such a rogue, cheat and twister as yourself has managed to keep out of prison. If I ever meet you again, I shall take great pleasure in giving you the thrashing you so richly deserve. Yours Sincerely."

MOIRA: That's quite a letter. Who are you sending that to?

TONY: No - one, I received it in the post this morning.

MOIRA: Here's one you haven't opened - from the Ministry of labour.till

TONY: No, I never open their stuff till after breakfast - it puts me off me food.

MOIRA: I'll open it for you.

EFFECTS: (LETTER BEING OPENED)

MOIRA: Now let's see. (READS) "A. Hancock Esq. Dear Sir or Madam, on checking our files we find that for the last ten years you have been drawing twenty six shillings a week unemployment benefit, even though you are perfectly fit to work…."...

TONY: Nonsense, I wrote and told 'em about me turns.

MOIRA: "...This practice is proving so expensive that we have considered offering you a cash settlement if you promise not to bother us any more…"...

TONY: All depends how much they're offering.

MOIRA: "...However, the Minister, Sir Walter Monckton, has forbidden this. As he said over the telephone… 'I have to bash me brains out, so why should that lazy perisher get away with it'. He has therefore instructed me to inform you that if you do not resume employment immediately, he will be obliged to prosecute you".

TONY: Oh.

MOIRA: There's some more. "We notice you have listed two occupations at which you are skilled - beer tasting...and shop window mattress demonstrating…"..

TONY: 'Course, me ambition is to do both jobs at once.

MOIRA: "We do not appear to have anything on those lines on our books...but if you will report at your nearest Labour Exchange, they will no doubt find you a suitable alternative employment".

TONY: So it's come to this. I've got to go to work. It's not fair - it's a crime that I should have to work. I have such pretty hands.

MOIRA: Don't worry Tony, it'll only be for a day or two. You're bound to get the sack.

TONY: It's not that. This is only the beginning. They're onto me. Work. I'll never get over the shock. Think of the disgrace. They'll make me hand in me Old Layabouts Club tie. Me - the oldest member. The tragedy of it. One more year out of work and I would have got me gold medal.

MOIRA: There, there Tony, work's not as bad as all that. You'll get used to it.

TONY: I don't want to….Supposing it's habit forming?

MOIRA: Well, there's no way out of it. You'll have to go down to the Labour Exchange and see what they've got to offer you.

TONY: You're a callous woman, Moira.

ORCHESTRA: "GENEVIEVE HANCOCK"

CROSSFADE TO

EFFECTS: (MALE CROWD NOISES)

TONY: Excuse me, which queue do \i get on for jobs?

BILL: I don't know, I'm a stranger here myself I...Tub!

TONY: Bill! What are you doing here? They caught up with you as well/

BILL: Yeah, they've been having a clear out. There's half our club here.

TONY: But you Bill - the President. Gold medal and bar. Fifteen years and not a stroke.

BILL: I nearly had one when I got the letter. I tried to call an emergency committee meeting at Rowton House to discuss what action we should take - but none of the boys were there. They're all being forced to start work. They're <u>all</u> here. Harry, Charlie, Bert, Fred, Percy…

TONY: Not Percy?

BILL: Yeah - Percy.

TONY: I <u>am</u> surprised. Old Percy Higgins. I wouldn't have believed it.

BILL: Well, there it is.

TONY: Percy Higgins. He's been out of work so long he's forgotten what he's out of work <u>of</u>.

BILL: There's no doubt about it Tub, this is a black day for our cause.

TONY: Do you realise what this means…

GRAMS: "POMP & CIRCUMSTANCE No.4" (UNDER)

TONY: Every principle we stand for is in danger. The freedom of the individual to decide for himself where and when he is going to lay down his head without the horrible threat of a job looming over him on his awakening. The right of every man to be unemployed regardless of race, creed, colour. ...To work or <u>not</u> to work - that is the question. This happy breed of men - this little world - this precious stone set in a silver sea, is now bound in with shame. Alas poor Yorick - I knew him well...worked his head to the bone...and for what? We are being deprived of the basic privilege of every

self-respecting layabout. There's nothing so becomes a man as modest stillness and humility - but when the blast of work blows in our ears...it gets dead dodgy. What has happened to the heritage of our freedom-loving island - to our birthright handed down through countless generations? Shirkers of the world unite. Arise. There are too many jobs! There is not enough unemployment to go round! Let it be known here and now that I for one refuse to go to work.

KENNETH: Next.

TONY: (QUICKLY) Ancock.

KENNETH: A-N-C-O….

TONY: Oh no, no.

KENNETH: Then how do you spell it?

TONY: Haitch, Hay, Hen, C, Ho, C, K. The haitch is pronounced has in happle.

KENNETH: Let's see now… I've got your dossier somewhere. Ah yes. According to this you haven't done a day's work since June 6th 1944, when you were discharged from the R.A.C. as unfit for service.

TONY: Yes - jaundice.

KENNETH: It says here, cowardice.

TONY: Well I got the colour right.

KENNETH: You haven't worked for ten years. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

TONY: Listen, if it wasn't for blokes like me, <u>you</u> wouldn't have a job.

KENNETH: We won't go into that. Now let me have a few details. Age?

TONY: Thirty.

KENNETH: You look older than that.

TONY: I didn't till this morning.

KENNETH: Have you any references from former employers?

TONY: No. I never stayed long enough for 'em to form an opinion.

KENNETH: What sort of job did you have in mind?

TONY: Oooh, I don't know. Plenty of money, not much work, nine months holiday a year with pay, big expense allowance… Do you think that could be done?

KENNETH: Yes, if you can get enough people to vote for you. Now let's see what I have on my list.

TONY: Look, have you got one job me and me partner can do between us?

KENNETH: Your partner?

TONY: Mr. Kerr.

BILL: That's me.

KENNETH: One job between you.

BILL: Yeah, well you see we're out of training.

KENNETH: You, of course are an Australian.

BILL: Yeah, how can you tell?

KENNETH: No Englishman would walk around with the Test Match score pinned to his lapel. Whereabouts in Australia were you born?

BILL: In the bush.

KENNETH: Oh come, you're a grown man, you don't still believe in that twaddle do you? Did you have a job in Australia?

BILL: I'm ashamed to admit it but I did. I was a commercial traveller.

KENNETH: Selling what?

BILL: Zip fasteners to kangaroos. Then I got a job as nightwatchman at the Y.W.C.A.

KENNETH: Have you got any references?

BILL: No, but I've got plenty of scars.

KENNETH: Well now, let's see what jobs I have. Digging holes in roads.

BILL: No.

TONY: I'll mind 'em for you.

KENNETH: I have a few vacancies for some dockers.

TONY: No.

BILL: Why not, they might go on strike again.

TONY: No, too chancy.

KENNETH: Ah, here's something. Two men required by large West End Department store for the Christmas period.

BILL: No.

TONY: Yes.

BILL: Yes?

TONY: (SOTTO) Of course. Use your loaf. For the Christmas period. Fortnight's time we'll be out of work again. Perfect.

BILL: (SOTTO) Yeah. (ALOUD) Alright we'll take it.

KENNETH: Good. now if you'll both be so good as to put your signatures at the bottom here.

TONY: Right you are. There.

BILL: Now mine. There.

KENNETH: Let me see. Ye..ess. Well thank you for those two marks of affection. Now if you'll report to the manager of the store, I'm sure he will be able to find you a comfortable position.

TONY: As long as it's sitting down with me feet up, I don't mind. Come William, brace yourself. To work.

GRAMS: "HANCOCK IN SPRING"

EFFECTS: (DEPARTMENT STORE ATMOSPHERE)

BILL: Quite a big place isn't it. I wonder where we find the manager.

TONY: Ask one of the girls behind the counter.

BILL: Yeah. Hey dish.

MOIRA: (SWEET FEATHERBRAINED YOUNG THING) Yes?

BILL: Where can I find the manager?

MOIRA: Search me.

BILL: Later, right now I want to find the manager.

MOIRA: Are you two boys going to work here?

TONY: Only if we're watched.

MOIRA: Oh, that's good. We could do with some more men here. There's not enough to go round. You get some nice looking customers in sometimes, but then as I always say, there's not much you can do with the counter between you is there?

BILL: No, but there must be a way round it. (LAUGHS) Way round it...the counter… (LAUGHS)..way round… (TAKE) Where's the manager?

MOIRA: Well I expect I'll be seeing a lot more of you if you're going to work here. Don't forget, Lily's the name - I'm in handbags.

BILL: Billy's the name, I'm incorrigible. (GROWLS)

TONY: Alright, come on Fido, let's find out where the manager is.

BILL: She's cute isn't she Tub? I think we'll be alright there.

TONY: You leave the girls alone. You're always the same. We no sooner get a job and you're trying your hand at a bit of overtime. Now then - the manager. Let's ask someone else. Excuse me my good man.

ALAN: Yes sir?

TONY: We wish to see the manager.

ALAN: Certainly sir. Come this way please.

EFFECTS: (FOOTSTEPS)

ALAN: In here sir.

TONY: Well I don't think much of this for a manager's office to start with. It's not a very good advert for a large West End store is it? I'm very brought down. You'd think he'd have a bigger room than this.

ALAN: This is the lift.

TONY: Oh.

ALAN: Going up.

EFFECTS: (LIFT GATES CLOSE. WHINE OF LIFT. NOT GETTING ANYWHERE)

BILL: That's funny, it's not moving.

ALAN: I'm not surprised. This lift's constructed to take six people.

TONY: Well, there's only three of us in here.

ALAN: Yes, you'll have to get out sir.

TONY: Then how do I get up there.

ALAN: You've got two feet haven't you?

TONY: Yes.

ALAN: Place one of them four feet in front of the other, then placing pressure on the ball of the front foot, you take the rear one off the ground and bring it forward in a dragging movement until it can go no further, whereupon you place it on the ground...by which time you should find yourself moving. Repeat this process several times until you arrive at your destination - and good luck.

GRAMS: "GOING UPSTAIRS" (PLAYED DEAD SLOW!)

TONY: (BREATHLESS) Cor dear. Eighth floor. I don't know what got me suit up these stairs, it certainly wasn't me body.

BILL: All we've got to do now is find his office. It's along here somewhere.

TONY: Let's see. Supervisor. Accounts. Ah, here we are. Manager. Smarten ourselves up.

BILL: Is my tie on straight?

TONY: You're not wearing one.

BILL: Oh no? What do you think's holding my trousers up?

TONY: A tie is supposed to go round your neck.

BILL: I know, but it looks silly when you haven't got a collar.

TONY: Well, where is the collar?

BILL: You've got it on.

TONY: Oh yes that's right, I forgot. Of course - we changed round. You wear the shirt next week.

BILL: Well come on, let's go in.

EFFECTS: (KNOCK ON DOOR)

SIDNEY: (OFF MIKE) Come in.

EFFECTS: (DOOR OPEN)

BILL: Good morning sir, we.....Sidney! Sidney James.

SIDNEY: Hallo boys.

TONY: You come for a job as well? Ho - you won't get one with a Criminal Record like yours. You're a cheat, crook, swindler, confidence man, and what is more, I shall tell the manager personally as soon as I see him.

SIDNEY: Well, start talking, I am the manager.

TONY: Oh well, back to the Labour Exchange.

BILL: Wait a minute. How did you manage to get a job like this Sid?

SIDNEY: Simple. They said they wanted someone reliable, trustworthy, upright and honest.

BILL: So?

SIDNEY: So I forged some credentials and got the job. Mind you I was lucky. I would never have got the post if the other manager hadn't left.

TONY: Where did he go?

SIDNEY: I took him swimming but he couldn't get his feet out of the cement in time. Now then, what are you two boys doing here?

BILL: We were forced here by the Labour Exchange. They said you needed extra staff for the Christmas rush.

SIDNEY: That's right, I'm desperate for staff.

TONY: Well, here we are.

SIDNEY: Not that desperate.

TONY: What's wrong with us?

SIDNEY: Do me a favour. I know you two - dead lazy.

TONY: I beg your pardon?

SIDNEY: I've seen you. You used to pay people to go down and collect your unemployment money.

BILL: Look Sid, we've got to get a job or they're going to prosecute us. Just give us a trial.

TONY: Because if you don't, they will.

SIDNEY: Alright then, what can you do?

TONY: Nothing very heavy I'm afraid. I can't lift anything.

SIDNEY: You're not doing so bad with my cigars. I've told you before about that.

BILL: Look Sid, you've got a big staff here - all girls. You've got to keep them happy and contented.

SIDNEY: Well?

BILL: So what about making me their Recreation Officer?

SIDNEY: What equipment will you need?

BILL: A couch - soft music and a strong lock on the door.

SIDNEY: (KNOWING LAUGH) Billy boy, you're a fast worker eh?

BILL: Fast? When I get going, before they have time to say "I'm not that sort of girl" - they are.

SIDNEY: Well, I'm afraid I haven't got anything like that Billy. As it's Christmas, the best I can offer you is Head Counterwalker.

BILL: You mean floorwalker.

SIDNEY: When the rush starts there won't be any room on the floor.

BILL: What about wages?

SIDNEY: Ah yes, wages. You'd laugh your head off if I gave you twelve pound a week, wouldn't you.

BILL: I sure would.

SIDNEY: Well you're getting fifty bob a week and half a dozen handkerchiefs.

TONY: What about me?

SIDNEY: No - sorry, I've got nothing for you.

TONY: But you must have. Let me be a salesman. That's it. You won't be sorry. I can sell anything. I could sell horror comics to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

SIDNEY: No, I'm sorry, I haven't got anything.

TONY: But surely you can fit me in somewhere.

SIDNEY: Only if we move half half the store out. Now run away, I'm very busy and I -

EFFECTS: (KNOCK ON DOOR)

SIDNEY: Come in.

EFFECTS: (DOOR OPEN)

MOIRA: (LILY) Mr. James, Mr. James.

SIDNEY: What is it Lily?

MOIRA: Oh Mr. James, something terrible's happened. It was awful. He was rolling about on the floor...and the nurses...doctors...and ambulances. They had stretchers...they took him away...it was terrible...oh I think I'm going to faint.

SIDNEY: Quick - catch her somebody.

TONY: I'll do it.

MOIRA: No! Let Billy do it. (GROANING SIGH) Oh, I feel awful. Oh my head. Where am I? Do something. I'm going...I'm going….

SIDNEY: Get her a glass of water.

MOIRA: Haven't you got any Scotch?

SIDNEY: No, we haven't.

MOIRA: Oh well don't bother - I'm alright now.

SIDNEY: Look - Lily, what was horrible? Who was rolling about on the floor?

MOIRA: Mr. Fringepipe...you know - our Father Christmas. He's been taken ill.

TONY: What happened to him?

MOIRA: He ate one of those sweets that he gives to the children.

SIDNEY: Now what are we going to do? We've got to have a Father Christmas.

TONY: Well, I won't waste any more of your time, I'll just go and…

SIDNEY: Where are you going Santa?

TONY: Eh?

SIDNEY: You heard. Get downstairs and get that beard on.

TONY: Oh no, not this lad. No thank you. I hate kids. My mother was frightened by one.

SIDNEY: Who?

TONY: Me.

SIDNEY: There's nothing to it Hancock. Easiest job in the store. The kids are <u>alright</u> . Sweet, loveable little things. Butter wouldn't melt in their in their mouths. And they love old Santa. Remember that - they love him. By the way, you'd better take this with you.

TONY: What is it?

SIDNEY: A club.

GRAMS: "COMFY DOMESTIC HANCOCK"

EFFECTS: (SCREAMING KIDS)

TONY: Ho, ho ho, ho, ho. Come and visit old Santa. Season's greetings. Get your lovely Christmas presents here. Have a go at me sack. Tanner a dip. If not a tanner, a penny will do - if not a penny, you're a mouldy old...No! Sorry - wrong job. Jolly days. Jingle bells. Winter's here, lots of good cheer. Good King Wenceslas. Roll on half past five. Hallo, here comes another rocket ship full of the little perishers. Ha, ho, ho, ho, ho. Get off. Scat. Shoo. Go home. Git out of it. Hoppit. Take that! Get your thieving hands out of me sack. Aaah!! Who's pulled me eyebrows off? Get down you. I'll give you a clip round the earhole. Put that train set down! What do you expect for a tanner? Aaaaaaah. Alright, that's it - all off.

EFFECTS: (REFEREE'S WHISTLE. KIDS STOP SCREAMING)

TONY: Alright, come on. Own up. Who was the little clever dick who set light to me beard? That ugly pimply little herbert with the matches. Come here and I'll...what's that Madam? Yours. Oh,oh,ho. What a nice little chap he is to be sure. Let me pat him on the head. Where's me sledge.

BILL: Hey Tub, how are you getting on?

TONY: Oooh, don't talk to me. I've had the children of Britain swarming round me today. Heaven help any country that attacks us when this lot grow up.

BILL: Now now Tub, remember - you've got to be nice to them.

TONY: Nice. How can you be nice to kids who stuff holly down your trousers. Blimey, no wonder Santa got stuck up the chimney. He knew where he was well off. How are you getting on Bill?

BILL: Oh, wonderful, wonderful. I just love being a shopwalker. I've had to report four hundred and twenty four complaints from the shopgirls.

TONY: What about?

BILL: Me. Oh by the way, I've brought some more presents up for your lucky dip.

TONY: Oh good. Tip 'em in the bran tub. Mind the mousetraps I've put in.

BILL: Look out, here come some more customers for you.

TONY: Quick, where's me tin helmet and me shinguards.

BILL: (CALLS) Come along now kiddies, step up and visit Old Nick.

TONY: Saint Nick.

BILL: Come on now children. Line up and sit on Father Christmas' knee and tell him what you want for Christmas. You first little boy. You with your head poking over the top of your gumboots. Whisper in Father Christmas' ear what you want.

ALAN: (WHISPERS)

TONY: Certainly not, you horrible little monster. If I had Ava Gardner in me sack, do you think I'd be sitting here with you lot. Hoppit. Come along now kiddies, give old Santa your ten shillings and have a dip in his bran tub. What have you got sonny? A plastic comb? Oh bad luck. (VICIOUS) Give us your lolly. Ha! Ha! Who's next for the storehouse of treasure?

BILL: Well, I'll leave you to it Tub. I think I'll go and give the girls more grounds for complaint. See you.

TONY: Come along now children. Let's have you. Give us your money, grab hold of your present and buzz off. Who's next?

KENNETH: (KID) I say Mater, who's that fat stupid looking oaf in the red pixie hood?

MOIRA: (COCKNEY MOTHER) Be quiet Ernie - that's Father Christmas. Don't you want him to give you a present?

KENNETH: Oh, mater please, I'm four and a half now, I stopped believing in that Tommy-rot ages ago.

MOIRA: You go and get your present before I take my handbag across your face..

KENNETH: Oh mater, you're so old fashioned, you know modern psychologists deplore that sort of behaviour towards children.

MOIRA: Honestly Ernie, I don't know what you're going to be like when you start school, I'm sure I don't. Now go and tell Santa Claus what you want for Christmas.

KENNETH: Oh, very well, you and pater are financing the deal, I should worry. I don't know how you both manage on a dustman's money I'm sure. Er...good afternoon.

TONY: Ho, ho, ho, good afternoon my little man. And what would you like happy laughing old Santa to give <u>you</u>?

KENNETH: Oh, come my dear chap, I think we can dispense with the play acting.

TONY: Hallo, what have we got here.

KENNETH: Let's get down to fundamentals. What have you got in that dirty old sack of yours that could possibly interest me.

TONY: How old are you?

KENNETH: Four and a half.

TONY: How about a nice golliwog.

KENNETH: Ha. Laughable. What do you have in the literary line.

TONY: Well, we got Farmyard cutouts, Paint it Yourself Nursery Rhymes, Tiny Tots Annual…

KENNETH: Nothing by Bertrand Russell?

TONY: Oh, is he doing the cut outs these days?

KENNETH: My dear fellow - Bertrand Russell.

TONY: Oh him. <u>That</u> Bertrand Russell. Oh my word no, nothing by him, we're right out of Westerns. Bang, bang, another redskin bit the dust.

KENNETH: Why don't you join him?

MOIRA: I'm very sorry about this Santa. Ernie's very advanced for his age you know. He's starting school next year when he's five.

TONY: Oh - where?

MOIRA: Oxford University.

TONY: He's a bit young to start learning there ain't he?

MOIRA: Oh, he ain't learning, he's teaching. Now come on Ernie, you must have something off Father Christmas.

TONY: Yes. How about the Junior Kiddies Home Suicide Set?

MOIRA: You sell those?

TONY: No - but it won't take me long to whip one up.

KENNETH: I'll tell you what. Do you happen to have any books of war memoirs.

TONY: No, but I've got a telegram here that's worth a few nicker.

KENNETH: Oh, Mater, take me away from here, the man's a complete moron.

MOIRA: Don't be so rude Ernie. I've come here to buy you something and buy you something I'm going to. Have a train set or a space suit or something. If you don't want it, your father can play with it.

KENNETH: (THOUGHTFUL) Yes, that's quite a good idea. Then I could study him and complete my thesis on Post Childhood Behaviour in the Human Adult.

TONY: Look, I'll tell you what. How about having a nice pair of roller skates.

KENNETH: As you wish. How do you put them on?

TONY: Quite simple. I used to be a dab hand at this lark. Let me put 'em on and show you. You place your foot in..like..this - and strap them..round..here. Then you...put the other..one..like that. There. Now you'll notice I have left enough play in the straps to allow me to stand up quite comfortably and allow me to…….aaaaaaaaaaah!

EFFECTS: (TAKE OFF ON ROLLER SKATES. SERIES OF LOUD CRASHES & BANGS AS TONY CRASHES THROUGH DEPARTMENT . FINISH WITH ONE ALMIGHTY CRASH AS HE COLLIDES WITH THE CROCKERY STAND. GIVE IT THE LOT. THIS EFFECT CAN LAST AS LONG AS YOU LIKE)

TONY: (ON MIKE) Alright. Which clever little herbert was it who pushed me?

GRAMS: "BACK TO TONY'S - SAD" (FADE ON PAUSE CHORD)

FADE IN

SIDNEY: Let's see now. I make it two thousand three hundred and forty two pounds worth of damage, Hancock. Not a very good record for someone who's only been with us for half an hour, is it?

TONY: Wasn't my fault. I -

SIDNEY: Quiet. I've worked it all out..and if my figures are correct, by the time you've finished paying for the damage, that long white beard you've got on will be a real one.

BILL: Aw, give him a break Sid, he couldn't help it.

SIDNEY: Give him a break? Have you seen the state the store's in? Look at the gramophone department. For the first time since we opened it we've broken all records.

BILL: Well he glued them together again didn't he?

SIDNEY: Yeah, and a fine mess up he made of that. Listen to this for a mended record.

EFFECTS: (SURFACE NOISE & CRACK.)

Vera Lynn IF YOUR SWEETHEART SENDS A LETTER OF…

J. Locke GOODBYE GOODBYE - I WISH YOU ALL A LAST GOOD -

Vera Lynn CRY!

OVER THE QUIET HILLS
SLOWLY THE SHADOWS FALL
FAR DOWN THE ECHOING VALE
BIRDS SOFTLY CALL…

R. Earl TIMBER!!

D.Decker OH MY PAPA

H. Keel WITH THE FRINGE ON TOP

Whitfield CARA MIA WHY MUST WE SAY

R. Earl TIMBER!!

Wisdom DON'T LAUGH AT ME 'COS I'M A…

P. Dawson WILD GOOSE - BROTHER GOOSE - WHICH IS BEST - A

L. Desmond HOLD MY HAND

P. Dawson OR A

Clooney THAT'S NICE

P.Dawson OR A

K. Lloyd TEACH ME TONIGHT

P. Dawson OR A

Stevens AW C'MON

Hutch WHEN THEY BEGIN THE

Lanza BE MY LOVE!!

TONY: Well, that's the quickest Family Favourites I ever heard.

SIDNEY: And look at the crockery department. Every cup and saucer and plate either smashed, chipped or cracked. To cut me losses I've had to sell the lot to British Railways.

BILL: Look Sid, don't keep on - it wasn't his fault.

SIDNEY: You can keep quiet for a start. I'm not satisfied with you either. Why don't you keep your eyes open when you're walking around. There's been an outbreak of shoplifting.

BILL: Well you can't expect me to notice everything. You'll always get a little shoplifting.

SIDNEY: A little shoplifting? There's fourteen grand pianos gone.

BILL: Then that explains it.

SIDNEY: What?

BILL: I wondered why that old girl wanted six hundred yards of brown paper.

SIDNEY: This shoplifting's got to stop. Keep your eyes peeled in future. Now go on, back to your posts...and don't let me have any more trouble, or you're both fired.

TONY: Can we have that in writing.

GRAMS: "ALL GOING WRONG"

EFFECTS: (STORE ATMOSPHERE)

BILL: .....so there it is, Lily. He more or less said if there's any more shoplifting, I'm out of a job.

MOIRA: (LILY) Oh Billy, no. I couldn't bear it if you had to leave. Life wouldn't be the same without our early morning slap and tickle behind the suitcases.

BILL: Oh, don't worry Lily. All I've got to do is catch these shoplifters. I'll show 'em.

MOIRA: Aren't you frightened of them?

BILL: Frightened? Ha. Wait till I catch 'em. I'll jump on 'em, throw 'em over my shoulder, grab 'em by the scruff of the neck, frog march 'em to the nearest door and toss 'em out into the street.

MOIRA: Yes - but supposing it's a man.

BILL: In that case, you'll have to help. Look, we'll have to get Tony in on this. Maybe he's got some ideas. Where is he?

MOIRA: Leaning out of the window talking to that street corner Father Christmas.

SLIGHT FADE IN

TONY: ...Of course this isn't the first time I've dressed up as Father Christmas you know. You can tell by the way me beard hangs can't you, sort of off the shoulder. No, I played Father Christmas last year at the Infants School down the road.
ALLAN: My kid goes there.
TONY: Yes, of course he does. I remember. Dead spit of you. Got a beard just like yours. So anyway, they decided it would be a good idea for me to come down the chimney. Well I wasn't standing for that. I mean a bloke my size.
ALAN: Oh, I don't know, you're not all that big. I mean I've seen blokes...you're just well built.
TONY: A joke's a joke, but that's going a bit too far. I mean I like to be helpful..but there's a limit. I'm not a difficult person - I hope. So I told the Headmaster - "No", I said. "You're not getting me to come down that chimney. I'm all for Christmas" I said "I know the kids enjoy it but I'm sorry - no chimney - not for this lad"..... Of course he was after a buckshee sweep out you know.
ALAN: I thought that was it.
TONY: You know his type. You've met 'em.
ALAN: I know him.
TONY: Well of course you do, your kid goes there. Little fellow with a beard. So anyway, as I was saying, I put me foot down. I point blank refused to come down the chimney. "Very well", he said, "you don't get paid". Well I was out on the roof and squeezing me way down, when he says to the kids - "Quiet now children. Father Christmas is coming down the chimney". Well, you should have seen those kids' faces. They fair lit up. Their little eyes shined with delight. They clapped their chubby little hands with glee - then the head boy stepped up to the fireplace - couldn't have been more than about six - and he looked up the chimney, his sweet little face was a picture - and he says - "Are you up there Santa?" And I says "Yes little man", I am". And with a lovely smile of delight he bent down - and do you know what he did? He lit the fire.

BILL: Hey Tub, look - we've got to catch this burglar. Then instead of giving us the sack, Sid might give us a rise or promotion. Have you got any ideas?

TONY: Yes, I've been thinking about it. Listen. This is what we'll do. We'll outsmart him. Tonight, after the store closes, we'll lay a trap. We'll put a piece of imitation jewellery on the floor just inside the main door - which we leave open.

MOIRA: Of course. Inviting him to come in.

TONY: Exactly. Now - attached to the ring is a bit of string, with us on the other end. When he bends down to pick up the ring...I'm not boring you am I?

BILL: No, no.

TONY: Well we pull the ring slowly toward us, then when he gets right up close to us….wallop!

BILL? What?

TONY: He hits us. But there's enough of us here to overpower him. Alright?

BILL: Right.

TONY: Then we run and get the police, have him put inside, then Mr. James will be very pleased with us. (end of plot) Right, roll on tonight.

GRAMS: "TIME & MOVEMENT"

(SEGUE)

GRAMS: "HAUNTED HOUSECOCK"

EFFECTS: (FOOTSTEPS COMING ON MIKE)

TONY: Grab him!

EFFECTS: (BIG FIGHT NOISES)

CAST: (GRUNTS. GROANS. "Stop him - don't let him get away. Hold him. Take that etc.")

GRAMS: "HANCOCK RUMBLED"
TONY: Well, I'm sorry Mr. James, our little plan didn't work. He got away. Still we gave him a right bashing. He won't come back in a hurry.

SIDNEY: No, he won't need to.

TONY: What do you mean?

SIDNEY: While you were beating the daylights out of the nightwatchman, the thief pinched another fifteen pianos.

GRAMS: "HANCOCK RUMBLED"

KENNETH: ..Well, there you are Mr. Johnson, you start work on Monday morning - and I hope you like the job we've managed to get for you. Next.

TONY: Ancock. Haich - ho - hen - c - he - c - k.

GRAMS: CLOSING THEME (UP & UNDER)

ADRIAN: You have been listening to "Hancock's Half Hour", featuring the lad himself, with Moira Lister, Bill Kerr, Sidney James and Kenneth Williams. Incidental music was composed by Wally Stott and recorded by the BBC Augmented Revue Orchestra, conducted by Harry Rabinowitz. The script was written by Ray Galton and Alan Simpson - and the programme, which was recorded was produced by Dennis Main Wilson.

GRAMS: "HANCOCK THEME" UP & TO END

(SEGUE)

GRAMS: PLAYOUT - TO END